Unconditional Love?

1 John 4:7-8

“7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”

God is love. However, the love of God is often misunderstood by many, being mislabeled and misapplied to appeal to the lost of this world. Those who are in their sins are made comfortable in their sins, as they are told that they are loved by God, and that his love is unconditional.

What is love? To understand the love of God, it is important to understand what love is. Love has a different meaning depending on who it is that is showing it. Jesus said the following:

John 14:28

“…If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”

This is love, when it is shown from man to God. A man who loves God will keep his words. A man who loves God will walk after his commandments (2 John 1:6). He that says he loves God and keeps not his commandments does not love him, but hates him and loves death (John 14:24, Proverbs 8:36, Romans 6:23).

Matthew 3:16-17

“16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

This is love, when it is shown from God to man. When God is pleased with a man, he loves him. A man whom God is pleased with is a man whom God will bless and give all things into his hands (John 3:35, 1 Corinthians 3:21-23); but a man whom God is not pleased with shall have curses, and that which he hath shall be taken from him (Matthew 25:14-30, Luke 8:18, Proverbs 3:33).

Is the Lord God pleased with sinners? Does his soul delight in the wicked? No, he is not pleased with sinners, and his soul does not delight in the wicked, but he is angry with the wicked every day (Psalm 7:11-16). Some may say that God loves the sinner, but hates the sin. This is error. A man cannot be separated from his sins, for a man is defined by his actions and words (Proverbs 20:11, Matthew 7:16-20). God rewards a man according to his works, or fruits (Proverbs 24:12). God has delight in, or love for, those who do righteousness; and those who do righteousness are rewarded with blessings and are exalted (Psalm 24:3-5, Proverbs 8:32-35, Psalm 18:20-26). God has no delight in, or love for, those who do wickedly, who sin before him; and those who sin are rewarded with death and destruction (Psalm 104:35, Psalm 91:5-8, Proverbs 13:21, 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10). Indeed, the LORD shall reward every man according to his works, whether good or bad (Job 34:10-11, Psalm 28:2-4, Revelation 22:12).

Now, this love, wherein God is pleased with a man, is not unconditional. There is a condition that one must fulfill for God to love him, to have delight in him. That condition is that he must keep his commandments and walk in them. Then he shall be loved of the Father, and of his Son (John 14:21-23).

But wait, it is written:

1 John 4:19

"We love him, because he first loved us."

If it is God that loved us first and us who loved him thereafter, then how can his love be conditioned on us loving him? If we were sinners and dead in our sins, and yet God loved us (Ephesians 2:1-7), does that not show that God's love is unconditional?

Firstly, it is important to understand who is "us", who is "we"; who is being referred to in 1 John 4:19 and Ephesians 2:1-7? The epistles that are called Ephesians is and 1 John are letters that were written by the apostles Paul and John through the Holy Ghost to the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:1, 1 John 2:1). The saints and faithful in Christ Jesus are those who have obeyed the gospel of Christ to be washed from their sins, being baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and have received the gift of the Holy Ghost, which is manifested in speaking with other tongues and prophesying (Acts 2:1-4, 38-39). These are no longer sinners, but saints; they are righteous. Now being righteous, the Lord God has delight in them. But there was a time when before one was righteous, he was a sinner, a child of wrath, carried away with the lust of the world (Ephesians 2:1-3). When he was a sinner, when his works were wicked, did God have delight in him? Was God pleased with him? No, he was not. For he was alienated from God and was of the darkness; and being that he was alienated from God, it was therefore necessary for him to be reconciled to God - for what need is there for reconciliation if God already loves a man, if he is pleased with him? (Ephesians 5:8, Colossians 1:21-23). But God's mercy and grace, which he extended to all men, on a conditional basis, was made available to those who were sinners, that they might become righteous. Conditionally, because the way of salvation, which was made available to all men by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ the Son of God, was not automatically imputed unto all men. For a man to be saved from his sins, for a man to enter into the kingdom of heaven, he must yet obey the gospel of Christ (John 3:5, Mark

16:15-16, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 2:38-40). A man who does not fulfill this condition shall not be a partaker of the grace and mercy that God shewed forth unto the world.

This love, wherein goodness, kindness and mercy is shown from God to man, is one that does not require for God to have delight in man, to love him. For though God hates the wicked, yet he loves the righteous, and desires that none should perish, but that all should repent and walk before him in righteousness (Ezekiel 18:32, 33:11, 2 Peter 3:9, 1 Timothy 2:1-4). It was necessary for God to show goodness, kindness and mercy unto us first, who were before sinners. For it is written:

Psalm 14:1-3

"1 The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.

2 The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.

3 They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

No man sought to obey God on his own, no man understood on his own. All were gone aside; there was none that did good, even as it is written, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Man, being born a sinner (Psalm 51:5), is disposed to sin and to serve sin from his birth, being in bondage to sin. Therefore, it was necessary for God to show mercy unto man, that a way should be made for him to be freed from his bondage to sin, that he may serve righteousness. Those that hearken to the voice of God and obey his gospel, walking in righteousness, are those who are partakers of the grace and mercy that God extended to mankind. Being therefore freed from the bondage of sin and delivered from the power of darkness, that we way walk in newness in life (for it was impossible for us to do so on our own – Romans 9:15-16) we therefore love him, and are able to love him - being

faithful servants, obedient to his every command, because he first loved us - showing mercy unto us and making it possible for us to be delivered from sin unto righteousness.

The love of God, wherein mercy and goodness is shown unto man, is not unconditional. The longsuffering of God towards the wickedness of man is not limitless, it is very great, yea, but it is not limitless, it is not unconditional. Did not the Lord God flood the earth with water when he saw the wickedness of man was great in the earth (Genesis 6:5-7). Did not the Lord God send the children of Israel unto the Amorites and the surrounding nations, and cut them off from the land? (Genesis 15:16, Exodus 23:23, Deuteronomy 7:1-5, 9:3-5). Did not God rain fire and brimstone upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah? (Genesis 13:10-13, 18:20-11, 19:23-25). The Lord God declared that he shows mercy unto thousands that love him and keep his commandments (Exodus 20:6). Therefore, being that God desires for all men to come to repentance, that many should be saved (For the wrath of God is presently on those that are disobedient and will be speedily executed on sinners and transgressors), he is patient, giving time to man to repent and turn from his sins (Ezekiel 18:32, 33:11, 2 Peter 3:9, 1 Timothy 2:1-4). Those who turn from their sins and obey him verily are those who shall benefit from his patience and partake in his mercy and grace. But let us not forget, God shall not be mocked! That which a man sows, that will he reap (Galatians 6:7). If a man does not turn form his sins, but continues therein, all that awaits him is wrath, not love.

Mark 12:28-31

“28 And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

31 And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."

When asked, Jesus the Son of God declared that to love the Lord God with all thy heart, and soul, mind, and strength, and to love thy neighbor as thyself were the two greatest commandments. We know what it means to love the Lord God, but what of our neighbor? Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law (Romans 13:10). This love is one that the children of God have in themselves. Yet, this commandment from God to love our neighbor is not that we should be pleased with our neighbor and delight in him, but that we should do him good and not ill, showing him mercy, kindness, and grace, because the Lord God showed it to us while we were yet sinners. We see throughout the scriptures that the saints do not delight in, nor have companionship with that which is evil, wicked, abominable, and against the commandments of God (Ephesians 5:11, Psalm 139:21-22, Psalm 97:10, Proverbs 8:13). If one must then hate evil, how can he be pleased with, or have delight in his neighbor when he commits wickedness? Can one who is righteous love his neighbor in this manner? Is one commanded to love his neighbor in this manner? No, God forbid. It is written:

Isaiah 5:20

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"

And,

Proverbs 17:15

"He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord."

A man who shows pleasure in his neighbor who commits wickedness, declaring unto him that God loves him (and not only that, but declaring the blessings of God upon him) is one who is justifying his wickedness and is an enemy of the Lord (Proverbs 24:24). Woe is unto such a man, for though he knows of the wrath of God upon the wicked, yet he commends his neighbor who is living in his sin, making him comfortable in them. There are many in this time who speak of love, who say that they love their neighbor, when they not only allow but also celebrate and exalt their wickedness. They verily love their neighbor, but not in the way that God commands. They love wickedness, unrighteousness, and that which is contrary to God, so they will therefore love those who partake in previsions and such evil things (Proverbs 2:10-15, 21:10). Such love is of the world; it is not of God. The love of God is true love, it is pure and undefiled. The love of the world is contrary to the love of God, it is perverse and corrupted.

The love of God, which the children of God have in themselves, is not to have pleasure in wickedness and abomination and in those who commit such things (Psalm 5:4). The love of God is to have pleasure in that which is righteous and holy, and to hate evil. The love that we are called to show to our neighbor is to show him good, kindness and mercy. For doing such is a testament against them who render evil for good, and who continue on in their wickedness, when good has been done unto them (Matthew 5:44-45, Proverbs 25:21-22, Romans 12:19-21). This was, and is the case with man today, whom though has walked in his own way, being in rebellion against God, yet has God done good unto him, giving him rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling his heart with food and gladness; but this he did as a witness against man (Acts 14:16-17), because there shall be no excuses for any man on the day of judgement. The goodness that God has shown, and

continues to show unto man, is to lead him to repentance and to turn from his wicked ways (Romans 2:4). For those who repent and obey, God is glorified in them, and they rejoice in his goodness, mercy and love that he showed unto them; but those who despise his goodness and forbearance, and do not turn from their sins, shall drink of the cup of the wrath of God without measure, which is already upon them waiting to be executed (Revelation 14:9-11).

So then, what is the message? What message should one speak onto a sinner? The message for a sinner should not be that God loves them, or that God hates the sin, but loves the sinner. The message should be that the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of men, and his vengeance shall be executed upon those who know not God and obey not the gospel of his Son Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonian 1:6-9). The LORD God shall judge the wicked and the righteous, and those who are found to be sinners before him shall have the flames of hell awaiting them, and the lake of fire and brimstone, where their punishment shall be forever. But there is good news! The gospel of Christ has been made available to all men, so that those who desire life, so that those who desire to no longer serve sin but righteousness, can be saved from their sins and be filled with the Spirit of God, that they may walk in righteousness all the days of their life.

Acts 2:38-39

“38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”

This is the good news; this is the gospel of Christ, and it is the power of salvation to all them that believe; to the Jews first, and also to the Greek

(Romans 1:16). The way of salvation has been made available to man; the question now is, who will obey? Who loves the LORD God and his Son Jesus Christ? Who wants to serve the LORD? Who wants to be loved of God and of his Son Jesus Christ? Do you?